



## **Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program Monthly Update** **July 2006**

*The Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program (HCDOP) is a partnership of [38 organizations](#) that conducts monitoring and analysis and develops potential corrective actions to address the low dissolved oxygen problem in Hood Canal. Following is a summary of HCDOP activities for July 2006.*

### **Scientific Studies**

- *Project update*
  - About 30 individuals attended an HCDOP IAM Science Workshop held July 12. The goals of the workshop were to identify what we have learned so far and to drill down on some answerable questions that are targeted to being able to give preliminary information to decision makers regarding indications of the relative magnitude of the drivers for impacting the low oxygen situation. (Newton/UW;Hannafious, HCSEG).
  - The 6<sup>th</sup> HCDOP-IAM Quarterly Meeting was held on July 25. Thirty-three people, including personnel from IAM science and management entities, legislative personnel, and Hood Canal business interest, attended the meeting. The minutes have been posted at <http://www.hoodcanal.washington.edu/news-docs/publications.jsp>. (Newton/UW;Hannafious, HCSEG).
  - An acoustic survey to better understand the abundance and distribution of pelagic biota was conducted during a twenty hour period spanning July 26-27. (Newton/UW;Hannafious, HCSEG).
  - Experiments on microbial and phytoplankton production/respiration and abundance are being conducted at various stations in Hood Canal. Fieldwork will be conducted August 8-9 in Hood Canal. (Newton/UW;Hannafious, HCSEG).
  - Molluscan Study – HCSEG is still in the process of modifying the scope of work for the project as recommended by the scientist panel. There has been no data collected on the project to date. (Toba, DNR)
  - Deepwater Geoduck and Cucumber Surveys – Representative Eickmeyer sent a letter to DNR clarifying the intent of the \$650,000 budget proviso on deepwater geoduck and cucumber surveys. The scope of the project and budget are in the initial stages of development and a contract has not been signed yet. (Toba, DNR)
  - WDFW is working in August on establishing geoduck index stations in central and southern Hood Canal (Hamma Hamma and Tahuya?). Aging of geoduck shells (n=1800) collected in 2005 is nearing completion at the UW and analysis of annuli for elements and stable isotopes is beginning (by Yongwen Gao). (Sizemore, WDFW)
  - During the month of July, WDFW has been conducting a feasibility study in southern Hood Canal (south of Ayock Point) to test alternative methods for

estimating the recreational catch of Dungeness crab. If fishing success is a measure, there is a dramatically reduced abundance of legal male crab in Hood Canal this year. (Sele, WDFW)

- *New information generated by projects*
  - The oxygen inventory for S. Hood Canal is tracking the values seen in 2004, which were the previously lowest on record. Concentrations at stations in Lower Hood Canal are consistently very low (<2 mg/L). In the past few months oxygen levels in the deep water at the Twanoh mooring are again below 2 mg/L. (Newton/UW;Hannafious, HCSEG).

### **Corrective Actions**

- *Project update*
  - Simple Techniques II is working on scheduling the fall seminars for landscapers working in the Kitsap and Mason county portions of the watershed and scheduling clinics at area nurseries and garden centers. (King, SeaGrant/Knackstedt, PSAT)
  - The Shore Stewards program is planning on doing 25 site visits with interested members of the Shore Stewards programs. Site visits will address questions and concerns that property owners have, but will also be used to give information about practices that homeowners can adopt to help minimize their nutrient contribution. These will likely take place in the spring of 2007. (Mills, WSU)
  - Highland Excavating completed construction on a new cluster onsite sewage project that will demonstrate the Pirana<sup>TM</sup> proprietary equipment for nitrogen removal capability as part of a PSAT contract. The project involves three homes on SR 106 in Mason County. The new system replaced three individual systems that were located behind shoreline bulkheads. (Hull, PSAT)
  - Jefferson County Environmental Health submitted a draft final report to PSAT on its monitoring of onsite sewage systems. A final report with findings will be available shortly. (Hull, PSAT)
  - Duane Fagergren participated in two consultant's work sessions with PUD, county lead staff, and tribal staff on Hoodspout to Skokomish sewerage projects; major meeting scheduled for August 2 with elected officials related to three sub-area sewage projects in the corridor. He will participate on behalf of state agencies. Duane communicated with state and federal agencies on review process and will help coordinate another meeting on the heels of the Skokomish meeting. (Fagergren, PSAT)
  - Duane Fagergren worked with Dave Christensen and Jay Watson of the HCCC on contracts for Rehab program (\$1 M in Capital budget); finalized projects; worked with IAC on process required for project management and coordinated with HCCC and counties and tribes to get project detail. (Fagergren, PSAT)

### **Watershed Planning**

- The Mason and Jefferson Boards of County Commissioners met in a joint session on July 11 to consider the WRIA 16 (Skokomish - Dosewallips) comprehensive watershed plan that was approved by the Planning Unit on May 11 by a unanimous vote of six to zero. This is the culmination of over 6 years' worth of

effort on the part of the Planning Unit, including over 125 meetings. The plan contains recommendations for the watershed as well as specific recommendations for Hood Canal. The plan can be accessed at the following Ecology web site: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/planning/16.html> (Wiatrak, Ecology)

### **Outreach**

- *Public education and outreach updates*
  - Over 90 people participated in the first Lower Hood Canal Clean Water Festival on Saturday July 22. The Lower Hood Canal Watershed Coalition and the Puget Sound Action Team sponsored the festival with support from the Washington Sea Grant program. Eighteen federal, state and county agencies, universities, local organizations, and the Skokomish Tribe provided informative exhibits and expert presentations. There were numerous prize drawings with a grand prize of a \$300 septic tank inspection and pump out. Several prizes were donated by local businesses. (Hager, LHCWC)
  - WSU Mason Ext and the Mason County Health Dept. provided a display and publications on water quality, landscaping practices and OSS operation and maintenance at the Mason County fair July 28-30 (Piper, WSU)
  - Shore Stewards, the Mason Health Dept and other attended the first of two workshops for shoreline residents interested in the HCCC's Community Nearshore Restoration Program. (Piper, WSU)
  - WSU Extension, Washington Sea Grant, Mason Conservation District, Jefferson Conservation District and PSAT are collaborating on evaluation for their education projects in Hood Canal. Each groups is identifying measures that track progress towards their collective goal of reducing nutrients in the Canal. (Knackstedt, PSAT)
  - WSU Ext., Sea Grant and PSAT will meet in August with local health districts to develop educational messages to use in their outreach to on-site septic system owners. (Knackstedt, PSAT)
  - The Shore Stewards program is in the process of planning workshops for Shore Stewards and other interested citizens on landscaping techniques that should minimize their impact on Hood Canal (minimizing fertilizer use, leaving grass clippings on the lawn instead of putting them in Hood Canal and using native vegetation). These workshops will also address how to identify a failing septic system. (Mills, WSU)
  - The Shore Stewards program has been present at five community festivals and events so far this year, resulting in 37 new households signed up for the Shore Stewards program this year. (Mills, WSU)
- *Upcoming meeting notices/speaking engagements*
  - August 12: Shore Stewards will host a water quality education booth the Taste of Hood Canal in Belfair.
  - August 26: Shore Stewards will host a water quality education booth at the Harmony Hill Summerfest in Union.

### **Funding**

- Ecology has completed negotiation and is completing the signature process for two FY 2006 grant agreements to Mason County. Scopes of work have been identified for the Stormwater Planning for Belfair and Hoodspout Project and the Mason County Septic System Survey & Database Enhancement Project. (McKee, Ecology)

### **Communications**

- 615 subscribers currently receive the HC News. To increase readership, Emily Piper is working with local Chambers of Commerce and tourism organizations to include a link to the HC News on their web sites and to add the HC News post cards in their information packets.